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Labour Force, Australia

Headline estimates of employment, unemployment, underemployment, participation and hours worked from the monthly Labour Force Survey

Reference period February 2023

Released 16/03/2023

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Key statistics

In trend terms, in February 2023:

- unemployment rate remained at 3.5%.
- participation rate decreased to 66.6%.
- employment increased to 13,831,400.

- employment to population ratio remained at 64.3%.
- underemployment rate decreased to 5.9%.
- monthly hours worked increased to 1,901 million.

In seasonally adjusted terms, in February 2023:

- unemployment rate decreased to 3.5%.
- participation rate increased to 66.6%.
- employment increased to 13,826,200.
- employment to population ratio increased to 64.3%.
- underemployment rate decreased to 5.8%.
- monthly hours worked increased to 1,917 million.
- full-time employment increased by 74,900 to 9,669,300 people.
- part-time employment decreased by 10,300 to 4,156,900 people.

Key statistics - Trend

	Jan-2023	Feb-2023	Monthly change	Monthly change (%)	Yearly change	Yearly change (%)
Employed people	13,811,600	13,831,400	19,800	0.1%	419,900	3.1%
Unemployed people	504,900	505,500	600	0.1%	-51,700	-9.3%
Unemployment rate	3.5%	3.5%	0.0 pts	na	-0.5 pts	na
Underemployment rate	6.0%	5.9%	0.0 pts	na	-0.5 pts	na
Participation rate	66.7%	66.6%	0.0 pts	na	0.2 pts	na
Monthly hours worked in all jobs	1,896 million	1,901 million	5 million	0.2%	72 million	3.9%

Key statistics - Seasonally adjusted

	Jan-2023	Feb-2023	Monthly change	Monthly change (%)	Yearly change	Yearly change (%)
Employed people	13,761,700	13,826,200	64,600	0.5%	401,800	3.0%
Unemployed people	524,000	507,500	-16,500	-3.2%	-51,600	-9.2%

	Jan-2023	Feb-2023	Monthly change	Monthly change (%)	Yearly change	Yearly change (%)
Unemployment rate	3.7%	3.5%	-0.1 pts	na	-0.5 pts	na
Underemployment rate	6.2%	5.8%	-0.3 pts	na	-0.7 pts	na
Participation rate	66.5%	66.6%	0.1 pts	na	0.2 pts	na
Monthly hours worked in all jobs	1,845 million	1,917 million	72 million	3.9%	93 million	5.1%

Estimates of changes throughout this release are calculated using un-rounded level estimates and may be different from, but are more accurate than, movements obtained from the rounded level estimates.

Survey impacts and changes

Articles and other information

The ABS has again published [Insights into hours worked, February 2023 \(/articles/insights-hours-worked-february-2023\)](/articles/insights-hours-worked-february-2023) (along with data cubes EM2a and EM2b, which are usually published in the detailed release), along with [Historical charts from 1966 to February 2023 \(/articles/historical-charts-august-1966-february-2023\)](/articles/historical-charts-august-1966-february-2023).

Quarterly rebenchmarking of labour force statistics

The ABS has revised the original Labour Force series from July 2021 to reflect the latest available preliminary and final estimates of the Estimated Resident Population. This quarterly process ensures that the Labour Force series promptly reflect any change in population trends and minimises the size of revisions that can occur when the series are rebenchmarking following each Census of Population and Housing.

In response to COVID-19 related changes in travel, the ABS has been revising preliminary Net Overseas Migration estimates more frequently. Net Overseas Migration estimates are a component of population estimates, from which Labour Force benchmarks are produced. These revisions have been incorporated into the quarterly rebenchmarking revisions. For more information, please refer to '[Net Overseas Migration revisions in Labour Force benchmarks during COVID-19 \(/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/apr-2020#covid-19-impacts-and-changes\)](/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/apr-2020#covid-19-impacts-and-changes)'.

The usual resident civilian population in December 2022 was revised up by around 0.15% (around 32,000 people).

Revisions to original series also result in revisions to seasonally adjusted series.

Seasonal adjustment and trend estimates

The ABS will be undertaking an 'Annual Series Review' of Labour Force series, ahead of the release of April 2023 data (on 18 May 2023). The outcome of this process will be summarised in a future release.

Survey response and timeline

The February Labour Force Survey was run in respect of the two weeks from Sunday 29 January to Saturday 11 February, and collected over the period from Sunday 5 February to Saturday 25 February.

The ABS would like to thank Australians for their continued support in responding to our surveys, given how critically important this information is.

Reference and Enumeration Dates

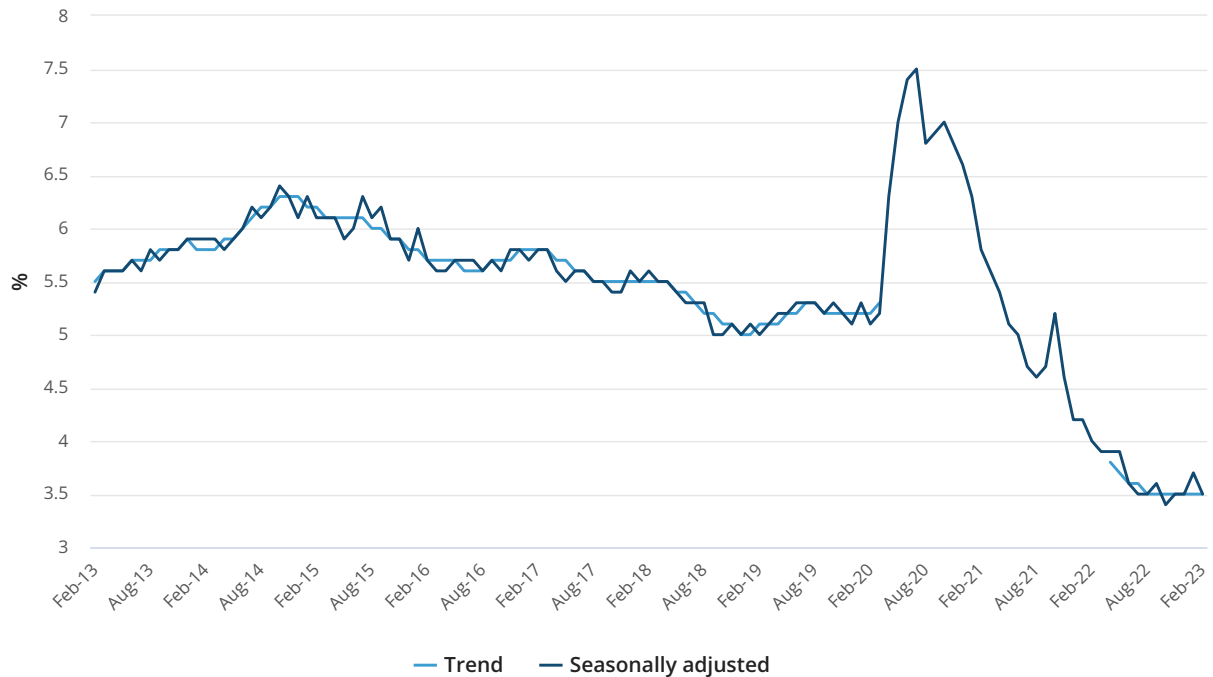
Publication	Start of Reference Week	End of Reference Week	Start of Enumeration	End of Enumeration
Jan-23	1st January 2023	14th January 2023	8th January 2023	28th January 2023
Feb-23	29th January 2023	11th February 2023	5th February 2023	25th February 2023
Mar-23	26th February 2023	11th March 2023	5th March 2023	25th March 2023
Apr-23	2nd April 2023	15th April 2023	9th April 2023	29th April 2023
May-23	30th April 2023	13th May 2023	7th May 2023	27th May 2023
Jun-23	4th June 2023	17th June 2023	11th June 2023	1st July 2023

Unemployment

In trend terms, in February 2023:

- unemployment rate remained at 3.5%.
- unemployed people increased by 600 to 505,500.
- youth unemployment rate increased to 7.9%.

Unemployment rate



Large month-to-month changes occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in multiple trend breaks. The ABS recommends caution when using trend estimates published in spreadsheets in this release for this period. Information on trend breaks can be found in [Labour Force, Australia methodology, February 2023 \(/methodologies/labour-force-australia-methodology/feb-2023\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/methodologies/labour-force-australia-methodology/feb-2023).

Employment

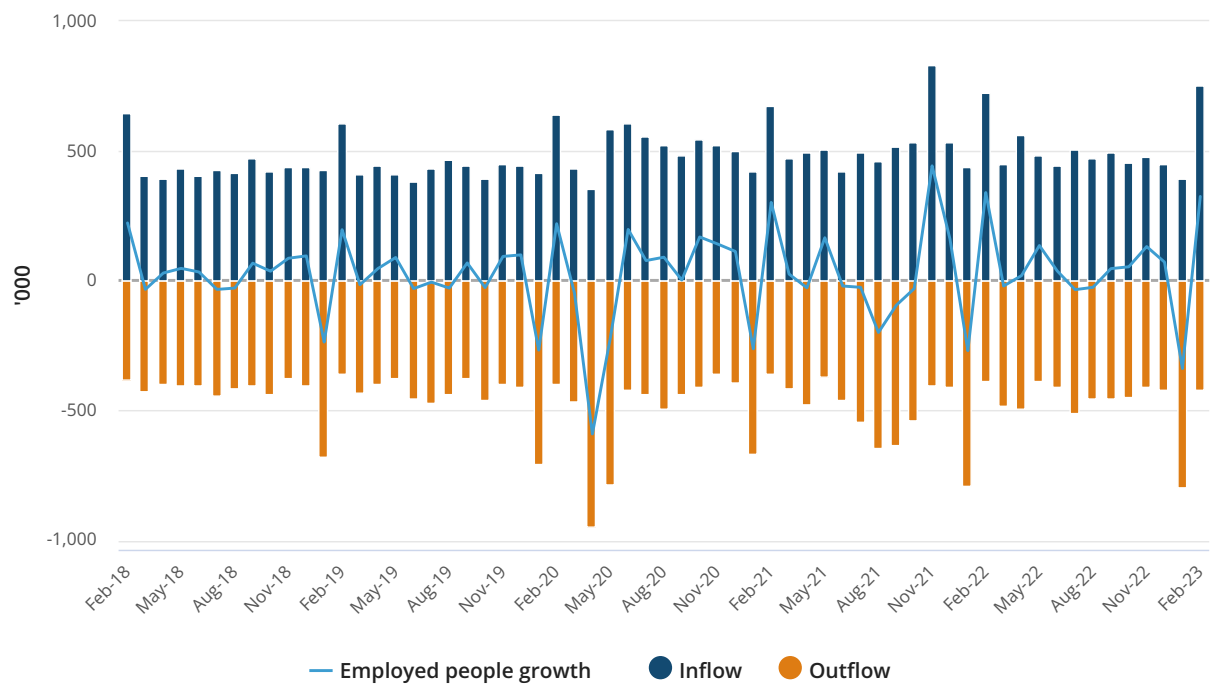
In trend terms, in February 2023, employment increased by 19,800 people (0.1%) to 13,831,400 people.

Flows into and out of employment

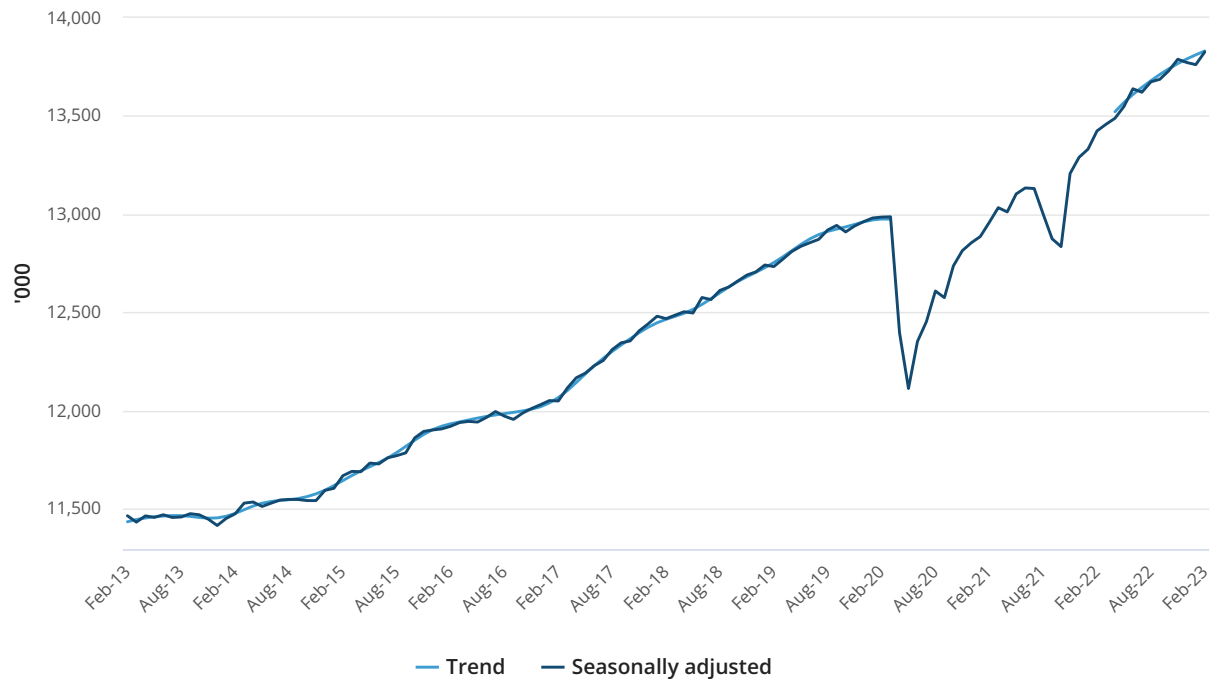
Flows into and out of employment are extensive and are based on the net matched sample of original employment growth between two consecutive months (around 80% of the sample). The (net) sum of the inflows and outflows does not necessarily equal the 'net' employment growth.

For February 2023, the net change in the number of employed people is the result of around 756,000 people entering employment (i.e. they were not employed in January but were employed in February), while around 419,000 people left employment (i.e. they were employed in January but not employed in February). This contrasts with January 2023, where around 396,000 people entered employment and around 796,000 people left employment.

Monthly inflows, outflows and employment growth, Original



Employed people



Large month-to-month changes occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in multiple trend breaks. The ABS recommends caution when using trend estimates published in spreadsheets in this release for this period. Information on trend breaks can be found in [Labour Force, Australia methodology, February 2023 \(/methodologies/labour-force-australia-methodology/feb-2023\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/methodologies/labour-force-australia-methodology/feb-2023).

Full-time and part-time employment

In trend terms, in February 2023:

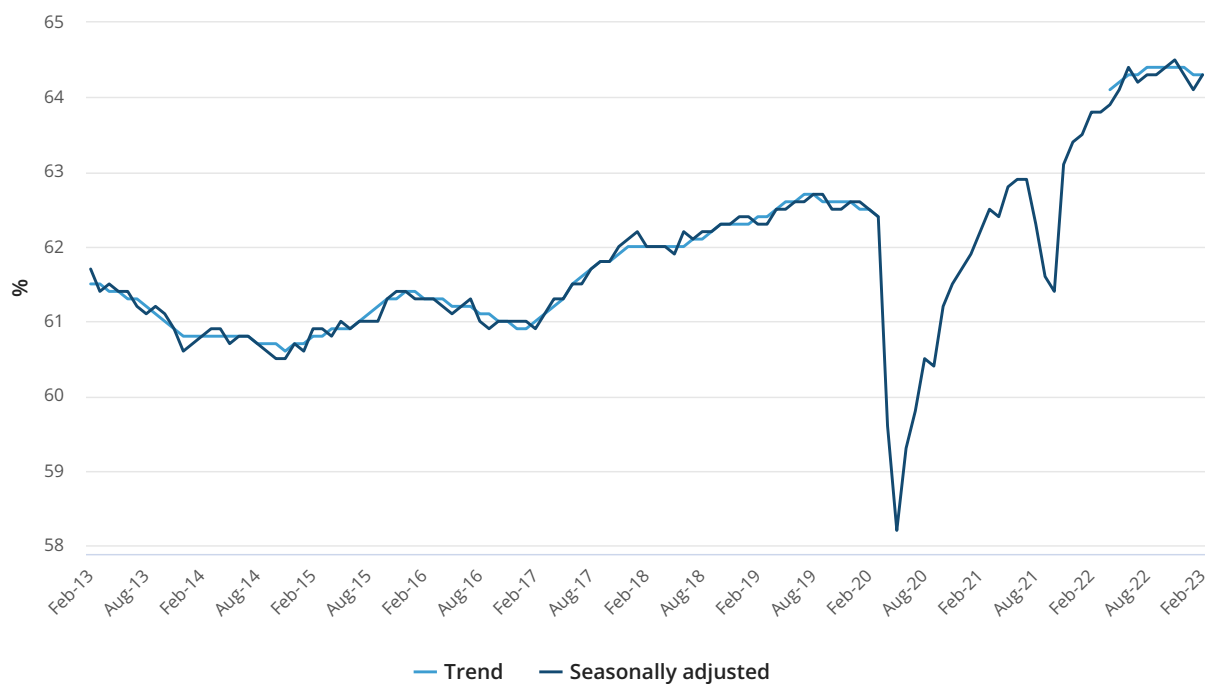
- full-time employment increased by 17,900 to 9,667,900 people, and part-time employment increased by 1,800 to 4,163,400 people.
- part-time share of employment was 30.1%.

Employment-to-population ratio

In trend terms, in February 2023, the employment-to-population ratio remained at 64.3%.

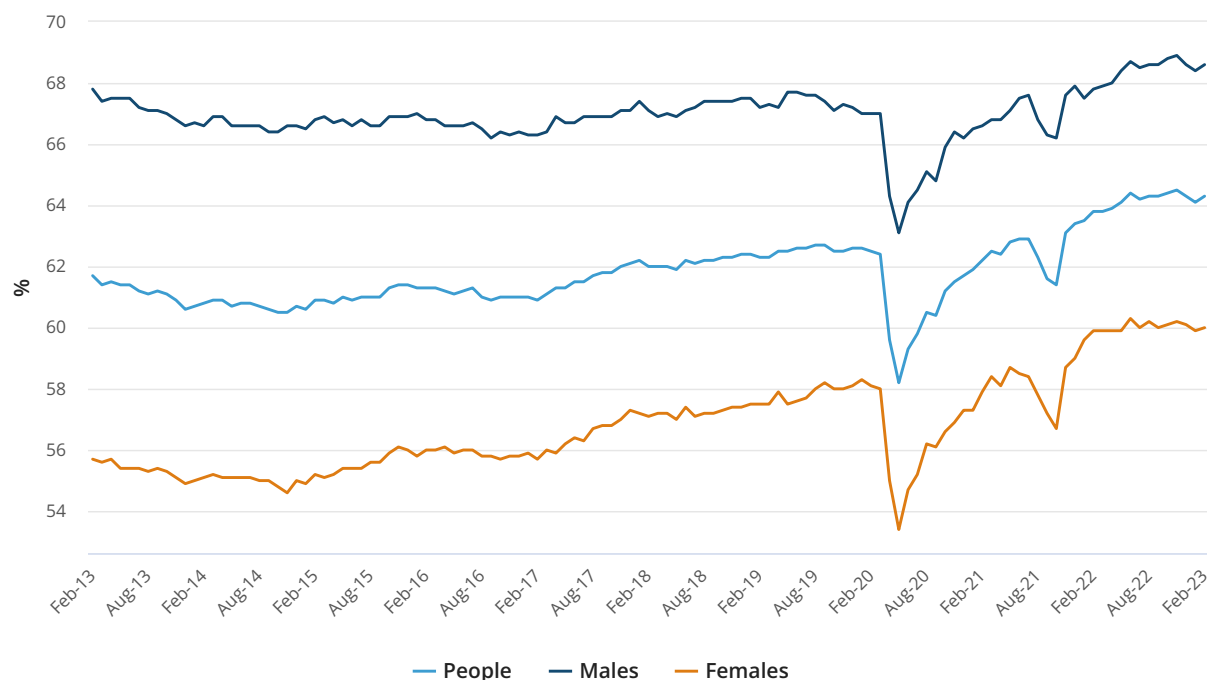
The employment-to-population ratio provides a measure of employment relative to the size of the population.

Employment-to-population ratio



Large month-to-month changes occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in multiple trend breaks. The ABS recommends caution when using trend estimates published in spreadsheets in this release for this period. Information on trend breaks can be found in [Labour Force, Australia methodology, February 2023 \(/methodologies/labour-force-australia-methodology/feb-2023\)](#).

Employment-to-population ratio, Seasonally adjusted

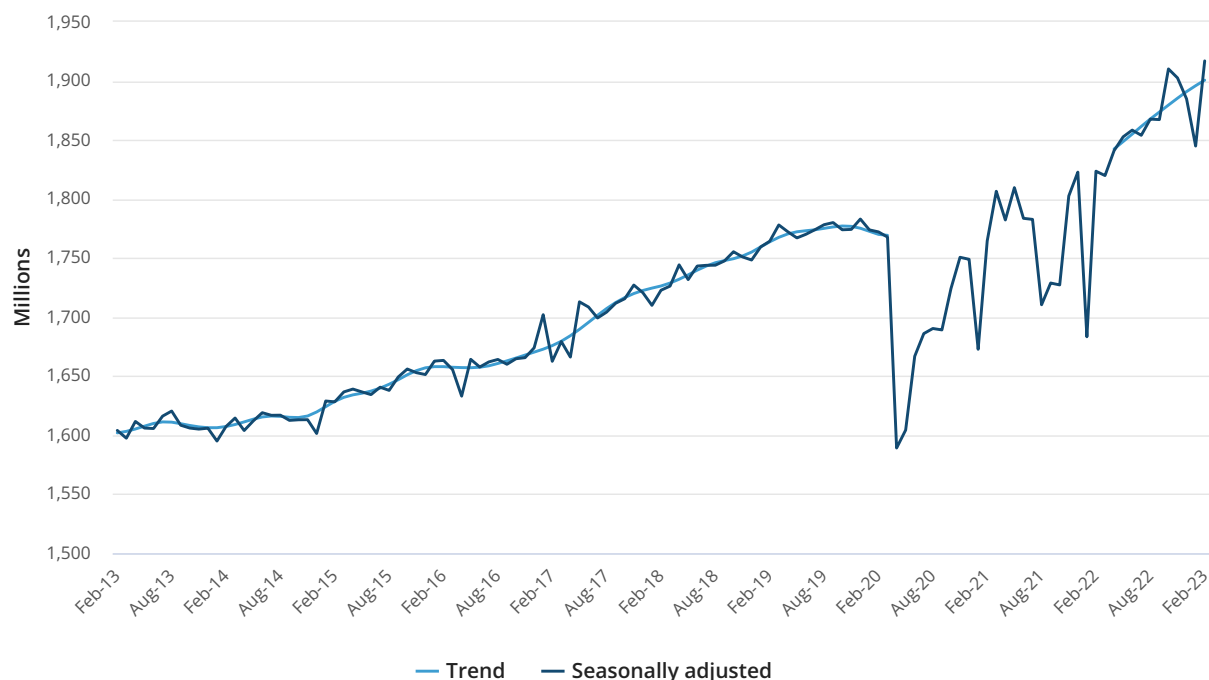


Hours worked

In trend terms, in February 2023, monthly hours worked in all jobs increased by 4.7 million hours (0.2%) to 1,901 million hours.

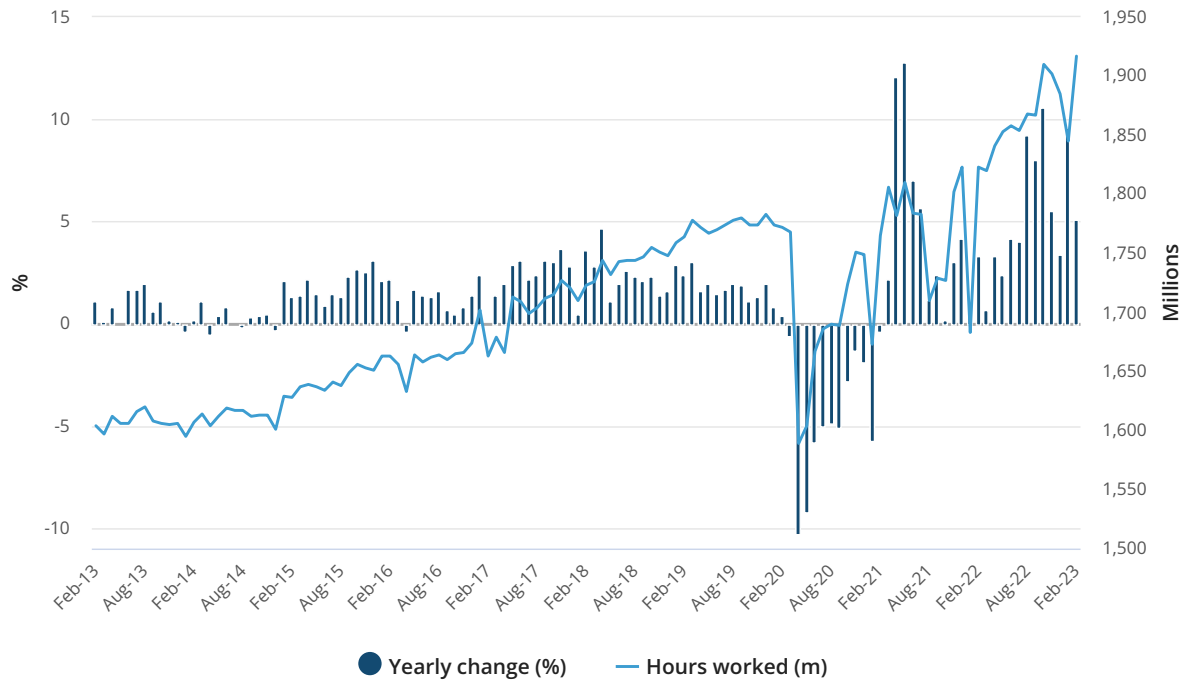
See the article [Insights into hours worked \(/articles/insights-hours-worked-february-2023\)](/articles/insights-hours-worked-february-2023) for more.

Monthly hours worked in all jobs



Large month-to-month changes occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in multiple trend breaks. The ABS recommends caution when using trend estimates published in spreadsheets in this release for this period. Information on trend breaks can be found in [Labour Force, Australia methodology, February 2023 \(/methodologies/labour-force-australia-methodology/feb-2023\)](#).

Monthly hours worked in all jobs, Seasonally adjusted

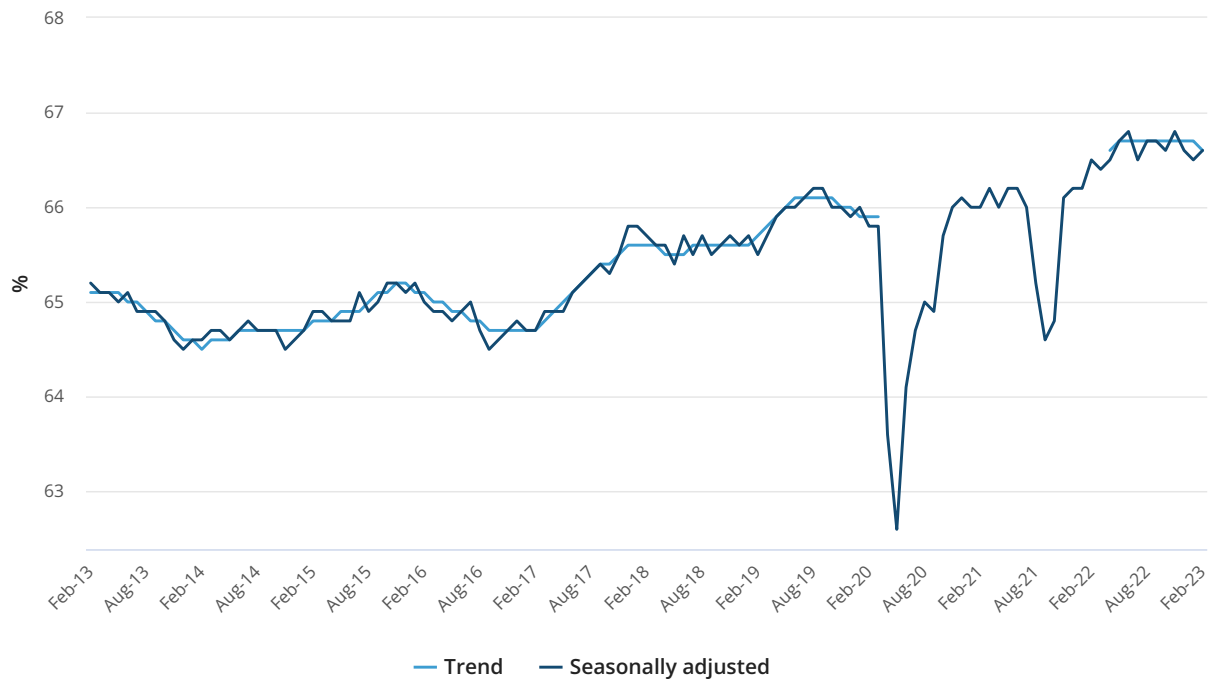


Participation

In trend terms, in February 2023, the participation rate:

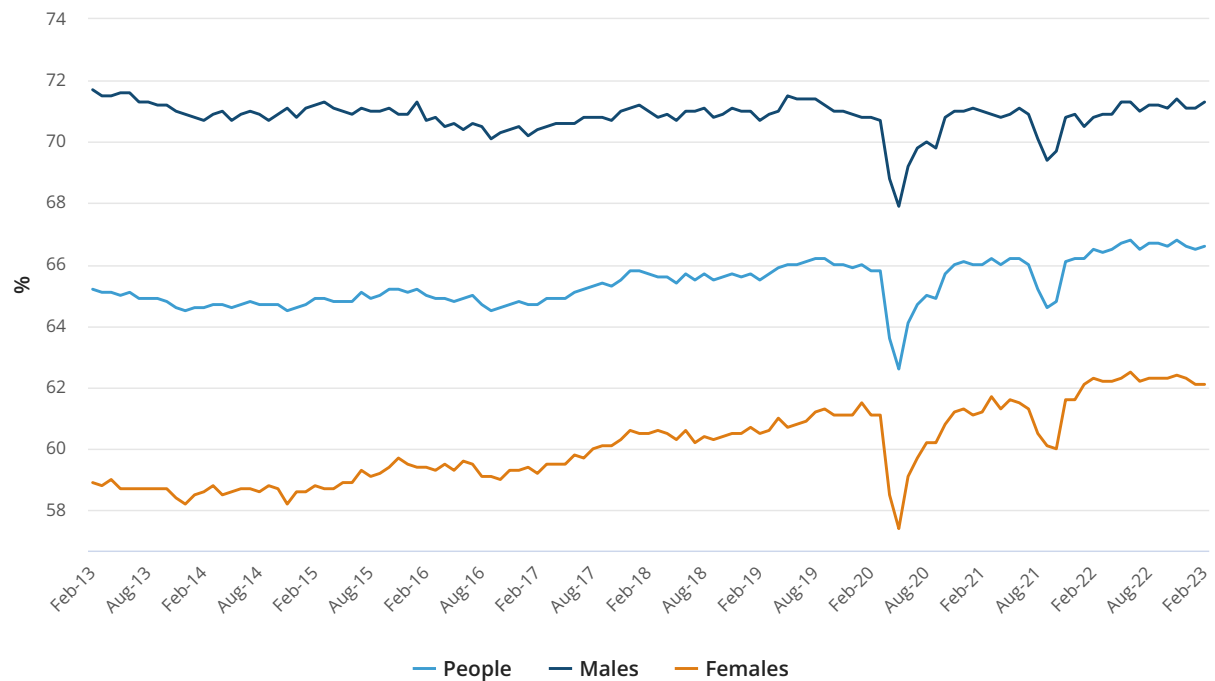
- decreased to 66.6%.
- decreased to 71.2% for men and remained at 62.2% for women.

Participation rate



Large month-to-month changes occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in multiple trend breaks. The ABS recommends caution when using trend estimates published in spreadsheets in this release for this period. Information on trend breaks can be found in [Labour Force, Australia methodology, February 2023 \(/methodologies/labour-force-australia-methodology/feb-2023\)](#).

Participation rate, Seasonally adjusted

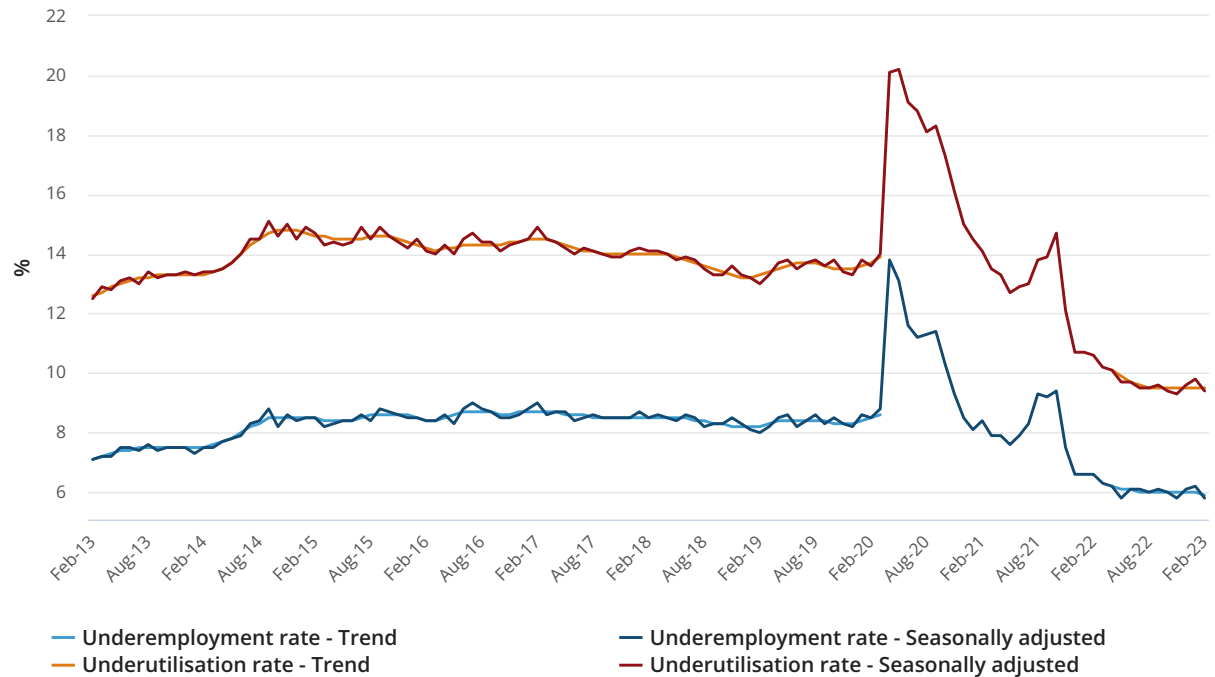


Underemployment

In trend terms, in February 2023:

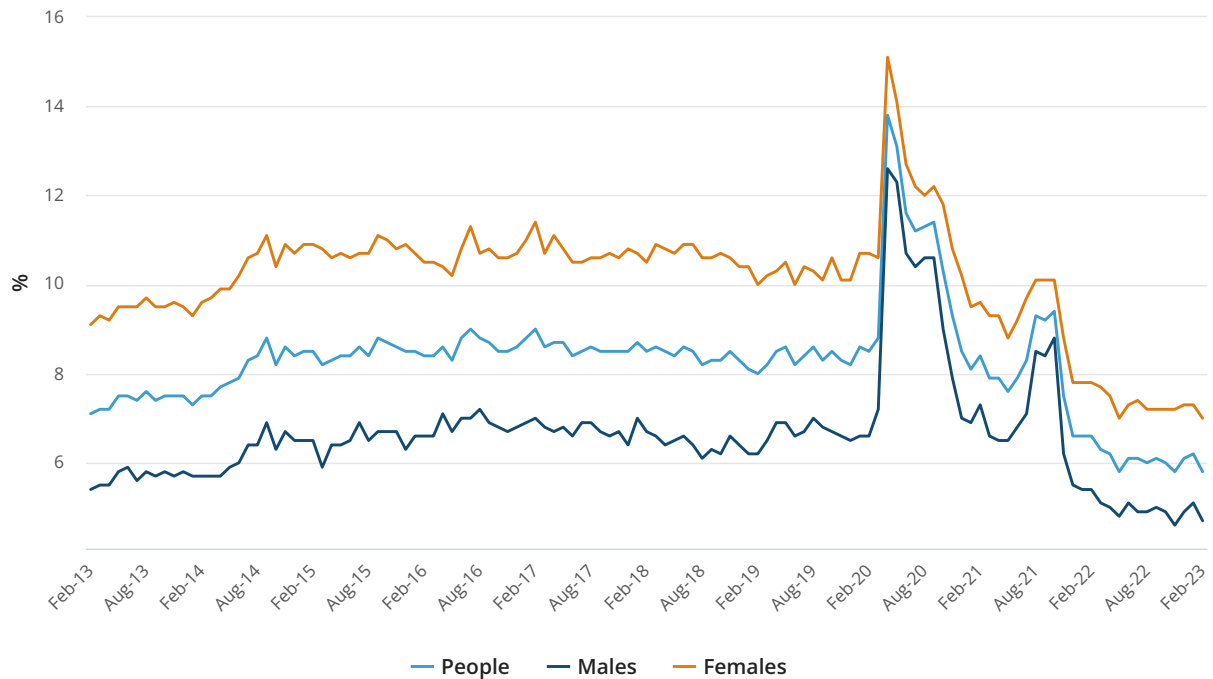
- underemployment rate decreased to 5.9%.
- underutilisation rate remained at 9.5%.

Underemployment rate and underutilisation rate



Large month-to-month changes occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in multiple trend breaks. The ABS recommends caution when using trend estimates published in spreadsheets in this release for this period. A list of trend breaks can be found in [Labour Force, Australia methodology, February 2023 \(/methodologies/labour-force-australia-methodology/feb-2023\)](#).

Underemployment rate, Seasonally adjusted



States and Territories

February 2023 - Trend

	New South Wales	Victoria	Queensland	South Australia	Western Australia	Tasmania	Northern Territory
Employed people	4,339,500	3,555,100	2,788,100	933,300	1,518,100	288,100	
Employed people - monthly change	0.1%	0.3%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%	
Employment to population ratio	64.3%	64.4%	63.6%	61.3%	66.4%	60.0%	
Employment to population ratio - monthly change	0.0 pts	0.0 pts	-0.1 pts	0.0 pts	0.0 pts	-0.1 pts	

	New South Wales	Victoria	Queensland	South Australia	Western Australia	Tasmania	North Territory
Unemployment rate	3.1%	3.8%	3.7%	4.0%	3.8%	3.7%	
Unemployment rate - monthly change	0.0 pts	0.0 pts	0.0 pts	0.0 pts	0.0 pts	-0.1 pts	
Underemployment rate	5.8%	5.7%	6.4%	6.9%	5.6%	7.6%	
Underemployment rate - monthly change	0.0 pts	-0.1 pts	-0.1 pts	0.0 pts	-0.1 pts	0.0 pts	
Participation rate	66.4%	66.9%	66.1%	63.8%	69.0%	62.3%	
Participation rate - monthly change	-0.1 pts	0.0 pts	-0.1 pts	0.0 pts	0.0 pts	-0.1 pts	

February 2023 - Seasonally adjusted

	New South Wales	Victoria	Queensland	South Australia	Western Australia	Tasmania	North Territory
Employed people	4,332,300	3,571,500	2,777,900	936,000	1,520,300	286,400	
Employed people - monthly change	0.4%	1.8%	-0.8%	0.5%	0.4%	0.2%	
Employment to population ratio	64.2%	64.7%	63.4%	61.4%	66.5%	59.6%	
Employment to population ratio - monthly change	0.1 pts	1.0 pts	-0.7 pts	0.2 pts	0.1 pts	0.1 pts	
Unemployment rate	3.2%	3.7%	3.8%	3.8%	3.9%	3.6%	
Unemployment rate - monthly change	0.0 pts	-0.3 pts	0.0 pts	-0.2 pts	0.2 pts	-0.5 pts	
Underemployment rate	5.9%	5.4%	6.4%	6.9%	5.6%	7.5%	
Underemployment rate - monthly change	0.0 pts	-0.9 pts	0.0 pts	0.0 pts	-0.3 pts	-1.5 pts	
Participation rate	66.3%	67.2%	65.8%	63.8%	69.2%	61.8%	

	New South Wales	Victoria	Queensland	South Australia	Western Australia	Tasmania	North Territory
Participation rate - monthly change	0.1 pts	0.8 pts	-0.7 pts	0.0 pts	0.3 pts	-0.3 pts	

Rotation group analysis

Sample composition and rotation

The Labour Force Survey sample can be thought of as comprising eight sub-samples (rotation groups), with each sub-sample remaining in the survey for eight months, and one group "rotating out" each month and being replaced by a new group "rotating in". As seven-eighths of the sample are common from one month to the next, changes in the estimates reflect real changes in the labour market, rather than changes in the sample. The replacement sample is generally selected from the same geographic areas as the outgoing one, as part of a representative sampling approach.

The sample comprises three components:

- the matched common sample (people who responded in both the current month and previous month)
- the unmatched common sample (people who responded in the current month but who did not respond in the previous month, or vice versa)
- the incoming rotation group (replacing people who rotated out)

The matched common sample describes the change observed for the same respondents in the current and previous month, while the other two components reflect differences between the aggregate labour force status of different groups of people.

While the rotation groups are designed to be representative of the population, the outgoing and incoming rotation groups will almost always have somewhat different characteristics, as they reflect different households and people. The design of the survey, including the weighting and estimation processes, ensures that these differences are generally relatively minor and do not affect the representativeness of the survey and its estimates. Monthly estimates are designed to be representative, regardless of the relative contribution of the three components of the sample.

The contributions of the three sample components to the original estimates of employed, unemployed and not in the labour force are in the Contribution from sample components to estimates spreadsheet.

Estimates for the incoming and outgoing rotation groups

Incoming and outgoing rotation groups

	January outgoing rotation group	February incoming rotation group	February outgoing rotation group	February estimate (Original)
Employment to population ratio	63.2%	64.6%	64.9%	64.6%

	January outgoing rotation group	February incoming rotation group	February outgoing rotation group	February estimate (Original)
Full-time employment to population ratio	44.4%	45.2%	45.6%	45.5%
Unemployment rate	3.4%	4.2%	3.8%	3.9%
Participation rate	65.5%	67.4%	67.4%	67.2%

States and Territories

In addition to analysis across the entire sample, the ABS also undertakes similar analysis for the responding sample in each state and territory each month, and highlights where there is a notable change for users to be aware of. For example, in February 2023, the incoming rotation group in Victoria had a higher employment to population ratio and participation rate than the group it replaced. As with any notable month-to-month movement of this nature in state and territory estimates, the ABS recommends exercising a degree of caution in interpreting short-term changes.

As for its reporting for the entire sample, where the ABS has not highlighted a notable incoming rotation group effect, any larger changes should therefore be considered to reflect a broader change across the sample.

Comparability with seasonally adjusted and trend data

The gross flows and rotation group data are in original terms only, and are included to provide additional information on the month-to-month movements. They have a considerable level of inherent sampling variability, which is specifically adjusted for in the trend and seasonally adjusted series. The trend data provides the best measure of the underlying behaviour of the labour market and is the focus of the commentary in this publication.

Contribution from sample components to estimates

[↓ Download XLSX](#)

[42.35 KB]

Data downloads

Labour Force Survey results are released in three stages.

1. Spreadsheets of the headline indicators are published in this release
2. Additional, more detailed spreadsheets and pivot tables are published in [Labour Force, Australia, Detailed \(/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia-detailed/latest-release\)](#) one week after this first release
3. Longitudinal labour force microdata are released in the ABS DataLab on a monthly basis, one day after the detailed release (see [Microdata: Longitudinal Labour Force, Australia \(/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/available-microdata-tablebuilder/longitudinal-labour-force-australia\)](#).)

See the [Survey output \(/methodologies/labour-force-australia-methodology/feb-2023#survey-output\)](#) section of Labour Force, Australia methodology for more information.

Labour Force status

Table 1. Labour force status by Sex, Australia - Trend, Seasonally adjusted and Original

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[705.57 KB]

Table 4. Labour force status by Sex, New South Wales - Trend, Seasonally adjusted and Original

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[522.34 KB]

Table 5. Labour force status by Sex, Victoria - Trend, Seasonally adjusted and Original

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[521.84 KB]

Table 6. Labour force status by Sex, Queensland - Trend, Seasonally adjusted and Original

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[524.16 KB]

Table 7. Labour force status by Sex, South Australia - Trend, Seasonally adjusted and Original

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[517.8 KB]

Table 8. Labour force status by Sex, Western Australia - Trend, Seasonally

adjusted and Original

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[521.44 KB]

Table 9. Labour force status by Sex, Tasmania - Trend, Seasonally adjusted and Original

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[519.78 KB]

Table 10. Labour force status by Sex, Northern Territory - Trend and Original

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[468.73 KB]

Table 10a. Labour force status by Sex, Northern Territory - Seasonally adjusted

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[162.52 KB]

Table 11. Labour force status by Sex, Australian Capital Territory - Trend and Original

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[425.1 KB]

Table 11a. Labour force status by Sex, Australian Capital Territory - Seasonally adjusted

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[162.67 KB]

Table 12. Labour force status by Sex, State and Territory - Trend, Seasonally adjusted and Original

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[4.3 MB]

Table 12a. Labour force status by Sex, Territory - Seasonally adjusted

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[277.92 KB]

Table 13. Labour force status for 15-24 year olds by Sex - Trend, Seasonally adjusted and Original

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[690.75 KB]

Table 15. Labour force status for 15-24 year olds by Educational attendance (full-time) and Sex

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[776.09 KB]

Table 16. Labour force status for 15-24 year olds by State, Territory and Educational attendance (full-time)

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[2.37 MB]

Table 17. Labour force status for 15-19 year olds by Sex - Trend, Seasonally adjusted and Original

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[585.67 KB]

Table 18. Labour force status for 15-64 year olds by Sex - Trend, Seasonally adjusted and Original

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[701.31 KB]

Hours worked

Table 19. Monthly hours worked in all jobs by Employed full-time, part-time and Sex and by State and Territory - Trend and Seasonally adjusted

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[256.88 KB]

Table 19a. Monthly hours worked in all jobs by Employed full-time, part-time and Sex and Territory - Seasonally adjusted

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[60.64 KB]

Table 21. Quarterly hours worked in all jobs by Market and Non-market sector - Seasonally adjusted

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[57.44 KB]

EM2a - Employed persons who worked fewer hours than usual by hours actually worked in all jobs and sex, January 1991 onwards (pivot table)

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[21.59 MB]

EM2b - Employed persons who worked fewer hours than usual by hours actually worked in all jobs, state and territory, January 1991 onwards (pivot table)

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[10.01 MB]

Underemployment and underutilisation

Table 22. Underutilised persons by Age and Sex - Trend, Seasonally adjusted and Original

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[4.8 MB]

Table 23. Underutilised persons by State and Territory and Sex - Trend, Seasonally adjusted and Original

↓ [Download XLSX](#)

[5.86 MB]

Table 23a. Underutilised persons by Territory and Sex - Seasonally adjusted

↓ [Download XLSX](#)

[400.99 KB]

Table 24. Underutilised persons by Age and Sex (expanded analytical series)

↓ [Download XLSX](#)

[451.74 KB]

Table 25. Underutilised persons by State, Territory and Sex (expanded analytical series)

↓ [Download XLSX](#)

[373.39 KB]

Flows into and out of employment

GM1 - Labour force status and Gross changes (flows) by Age, Sex, State and Territory, February 1991 onwards

↓ [Download XLSX](#)

[96.58 MB]

All time series spreadsheets

All time series spreadsheets

↓ [Download ZIP](#)

[26.19 MB]

Data Explorer datasets

Caution: Data in the Data Explorer is currently released after the 11:30am release on the ABS website. Please check the time period when using Data Explorer.

For information on Data Explorer and how it works, see the [Data Explorer user guide \(/about/data-services/data-explorer/data-explorer-user-guide\)](#).

Labour Force status by Sex, State and Territory ([https://explore.data.abs.gov.au/vis?tm=labour%20force&pg=0&df\[ds\]=ABS_ABS_TOPICS&df\[id\]=LF&df\[ag\]=ABS&df\[vs\]=1.0.0&hc](https://explore.data.abs.gov.au/vis?tm=labour%20force&pg=0&df[ds]=ABS_ABS_TOPICS&df[id]=LF&df[ag]=ABS&df[vs]=1.0.0&hc))

[\[Measure\]=Labour%20Force&hc\[ABS%20Topics\]=LABOUR&pd=2021-01%2C&dq=M9.3.1599.30%2B10%2B20.AUS.M&ly\[cl\]=TIME_PERIOD&ly\[rw\]=TSEST\)](#) - Number of people employed, unemployed and not in the labour force, monthly, February 1978 and onwards.

Labour Force hours worked data will also be released in Data Explorer in the future.

Article archive

Understanding the labour force

[Historical charts from August 1966 to January 2023 \(/articles/historical-charts-august-1966-january-2023\)](#) (January 2023)

[Historical charts from August 1966 to December 2022 \(/articles/historical-charts-august-1966-december-2022\)](#) (December 2022)

[Historical charts from August 1966 to November 2022 \(/articles/historical-charts-august-1966-november-2022\)](#) (November 2022)

[Historical charts from August 1966 to October 2022 \(/articles/historical-charts-august-1966-october-2022\)](#) (October 2022)

[Historical charts from August 1966 to September 2022 \(/articles/historical-charts-august-1966-september-2022\)](#) (September 2022)

[Historical charts from August 1966 to August 2022 \(/articles/historical-charts-august-1966-august-2022\)](#) (August 2022)

[Historical charts from August 1966 to July 2022 \(/articles/historical-charts-august-1966-july-2022\)](#) (July 2022)

[Historical charts from August 1966 to June 2022 \(/articles/historical-charts-august-1966-june-2022\)](#) (June 2022)

[Historical charts from August 1966 to May 2022 \(/articles/historical-charts-august-1966-may-2022\)](#) (May 2022)

[Historical charts from August 1966 to April 2022 \(/articles/historical-charts-august-1966-april-2022\)](#) (April 2022)

[Historical charts from 1966 \(/articles/historical-charts-1966\)](#) (March 2022)

[Understanding full-time and part-time work \(/articles/understanding-full-time-and-part-time-work\)](#) (January 2021)

[Understanding differences between Labour Force employment statistics and Weekly Payroll jobs \(/articles/understanding-differences-between-labour-force-employment-statistics-and-weekly-payroll-jobs\)](#) (April 2020)

[Classifying people during the COVID-19 period \(/articles/classifying-people-labour-force-survey-during-covid-19-period\)](#) (March 2020)

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